

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

As requested, the specification has been reviewed and amended so as to insert suitable headings throughout.

In response to the formality-based objections to various claims, these claims have all been amended so as to obviate the Examiner's stated grounds for objection.

Accordingly, all outstanding formality-based issues are believed to have been resolved in the applicant's favor.

The rejection of claims 1-5, 8-13, 15 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly anticipated by Kucharczyk '488 is respectfully traversed.

The amended claims make clear and explicit the link between the proximity of the identifiable entity (i.e. an authorized user) to the computer system, the ability of the identifiable entity to use the computer system and the unlocking of the linked locking mechanism as a consequence of that entity having been granted access to use the computer. In particular it makes explicit the requirement that "in the event that the computer system enters a state of inhibition of access, the computer system ceases to transmit unlocking signals or transmits a locking signal, so as to cause said linked locking mechanism to enter a locked state unless overridden" (e.g. by a physical key).

The applicant has realized that the sophisticated access control features which are commonplace on modern pc's for restricting unauthorized persons from using a computer (e.g. requiring a user to log-on, biometric sensor devices, automatically entering a password protected screensaver mode in the absence of user input for a specified period of time, etc.) can be leveraged to provide equally sophisticated access control to other types of office equipment such

as cabinets, etc. The idea is to arrange for the computer to control the access to the other items of equipment to be controlled and then allow an authorized user of the computer to access these at the same time as he/she is allowed to access and use the computer.

None of the cited prior art documents describes or hints at this fundamental concept. It is not therefore surprising that none of the cited documents discloses the feature of, "in the event that the computer system enters a state of inhibition of access, the computer system ceasing to transmit unlocking signals or transmitting a locking signal, so as to cause said linked locking mechanism to enter a locked state unless over-ridden." Since none of the cited prior art documents considers the technical problem solved by the present invention (i.e., of how to enforce sophisticated access control policies to other items of office equipment without requiring each item to become smart in its own right and without requiring multiple separate interactions with a user for each respective item) it is not surprising that none of them discloses the final feature of amended claim 1 either alone or in combination.

Kucharczyk is concerned with issuance of one-time use access codes for what is apparently an otherwise conventional locking mechanism. The idea is to issue a one-time useable access code to an expected merchant or delivery service which can then open the locking device and deliver an expected order or the like without the owner of the house having to be home to meet the delivery person.

This is the antithesis of applicant's claimed invention which requires the authorized user of a computer to be present and enjoying authorized usage of the computer before a linked locking mechanism is concurrently unlocked so that the authorized computer user also has access to whatever is in the locked container, device, information, etc.

Given this fundamental deficiency of Kucharczyk with respect to at least this feature of independent claims 1 and 17 (as above amended), it is not believed necessary to discuss additional deficiencies of this reference with respect to other rejected claims. Suffice it to note, as a matter law, that no reference can anticipate a claim unless it teaches each and every feature of that claim.

The rejection of claims 6-7 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being made “obvious” based on Kucharczyk in view Hasebe ‘609 is also respectfully traversed.

Fundamental deficiencies of Kucharczyk have already been noted above with respect to a parent claim. Hasebe does not supply those deficiencies. Accordingly, it is not believed necessary at this time to discuss additional deficiencies of the allegedly “obvious” combination of these two references with respect to the additional features recited in these dependent claims.

The rejection of claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being made “obvious” based on Kucharczyk in view Dowling ‘967 is also respectfully traversed.

Once again, fundamental deficiencies of Kucharczyk have already been noted above with respect to a parent claims. Dowling does not supply those deficiencies. Accordingly, it is not believed necessary at this time to discuss deficiencies of the allegedly “obvious” combination of references with respect to the additional features of claim 14.

Attention is also directed to new method claims 18-20 which correspond to apparatus claims 1-3. For reasons already noted above, these claims are also believed to be allowable.

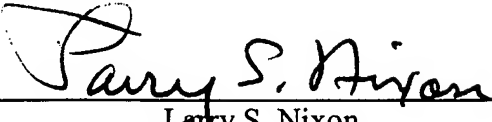
Accordingly, this entire application is now believed to be in allowable condition and a formal notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

PAYNE et al
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Respectfully submitted,

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